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**CORRESPONDENCE MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** September 11, 2003

**TO:** Employee Trust Funds Board  
Wisconsin Retirement Board  
Teachers Retirement Board

**FROM:** Julie Reneau, Administrator  
Retirement Services Division

**SUBJECT:** Benefit Payments System Development Status Report

**Background**

*The 2001-2003 biennial budget authorized the Department to contract for the development of a new Benefit Payments System. The proposed system will replace the existing annuity payment system, the accumulated sick leave conversion credits system, and the lump sum benefit payment system. It will also automate a number of manual processes including the calculation of lump sum benefits and provide improved service and productivity through Web-enabled self-service functionality in close integration with the WRS membership system. Implementation of the new system is scheduled in 2004. The Department has contracted with Covansys to do the system implementation and MAXIMUS as project monitor.*

*You will receive regular reports on the status of the Benefit Payments System project.*

**Project Status**

The project is currently in the middle of an eight-week project reassessment period. This is a time where the team is focusing most of its efforts on completing the complex technology infrastructure. This framework will contain programming that will make system development and future enhancements easier and more controlled. By placing logic in the framework it places programming parameters on development so that there is consistent and predictable application development and system interaction.

After seeing continued delays in the system architecture completion, there was a team reevaluation of priorities and resources. As the result of a quality review by MAXIMUS on basic system framework and architecture, we feel that the proper technical solution was selected. However, the framework architecture has proven to be more complex than originally anticipated. During this stabilization period, work on "use case" (process) design, user interface (screen) design and transition and test planning have temporarily been suspended.

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## Benefit Payments System Development Status Report

September 11, 2003

Work proceeds in the following areas:

- Letters and forms design for over 125 documents
- Data and demographics database design, test and clean-up
- Project and resource plan development

### **Project Leadership Changes**

As recently approved by the Department, Covansys has changed the project's executive and project manager assigned to the project. Early indications are that the new project executive and manager bring the knowledge, experience and expertise required for successful completion of the project. Analysis is now complete, and we have moved on to development and implementation.

### **Issues**

We must continue to carefully monitor schedule slippage. Continued delays in the system architecture completion will mean further delays to the project. Design, construction, testing and implementation cannot begin until the architecture is fully complete.

As we plan for project transition, testing and training, having adequate Department staff to meet the demands could be an issue and extend the project schedule.